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DISTRESSES AND COMPLAINTS OF A BACHELOR.

'Tis hard: but patience must endure,
And sooth the woes it cannot cure.

I am an idle man, and a bachelor of an easy fortune. I am engaged in no kind of business; but, having had a liberal education, and still retaining an inclination for letters, I pass the greater part of my time in study and contemplation. I have the misfortune to be troubled with weak nerves, and suffer under a thousand evils, which the unfeeling neither comprehend, nor know how to pity. As I still retain the appearance of health, my sufferings are regarded with little or no compassion, and my feelings are daily insulted by the attempts of my friends to laugh me out of complaints they are pleased to call imaginary. My disorder is, however, a real one; and whatever may be the cause, deserves commiseration: my present situation has very much increased my malady; and as, for some particular reasons, I cannot remove from it, the impossibility of an escape is no small addition to my torments.

They who enjoy perfect health, will smile when I complain of the miseries I suffer from the whispering of servants, the jarring of windows, and the slamming of doors; but these are slight evils, indeed, to those I am doomed to endure. At the door of the house where I lodge, hangs a young blackbird, who has only two notes, and they are so incessantly repeated, that was it not for the variety of other noises, they would absolutely distract me. In the hall is a parrot, of the small grey kind; he does not make the least attempt to speak, but keeps the most discordant screeching, somewhat resembling, but much worse than, the whetting of a hand-saw. Over my head is a nursery, where five small children pass the greater part of their time: they express their joys and sorrows in notes equally loud and shrill, and are never quiet for a moment, but when they are asleep, which seldom happens to all at the same time; and then the rocking of the cradle, and lullaby of the nurse, afford an agreeable variety to fill up the interval. Now, Sir, to a bachelor, the noises of a nursery are the most insufferable of any. I forgot to mention, that one of the children has a favourite spaniel, with a voice as clear as a bell: this contemptible animal has many offensive qualities; and sometimes, when I am in a profound reverie, steals into my room; and begins to bark so loud, and so suddenly, that I do not recover myself for some time to be able to drive him from me. He has another trick, that equally unmans me, though it is an action of endearment; as I sit sometimes with a book in one hand, and the other hanging carelessly over the chair, he makes me start from my seat, by unexpectedly licking my hand. In the next room to that in which I sit, the lady of the house keeps three canary birds: and her eldest son, a boy about nine years of age, has just begun to practise the fiddle—a cuckoo clock, in the kitchen, and the creeking of a closet door by the side of it, complete the instrumental part of the concert. However, that more senses than one may be gratified at the same time, in the morning the house-maid cleans the kitchen candle-sticks by roasting them before the fire; and at dinner time, the cook generally contrives to let two or three hot coals fall into the dripping-pan, which, from an under ground kitchen, distributes a most delicious savor over the whole house. In the evening, the olfactory nerves have the most complete gratification, from the suliginous effluvia of expiring candles, which, being suffered to burn down into the sockets, add the flavor of the solder to the rancid smell of the tallow.

These are some of my distresses by day; but when night comes, and I retire to my chamber, in hopes of refreshment and comfort, in sound and undisturbed sleep—when the noise of the nursery has ceased, and the scraping of an untuned fiddle no longer vibrates in my ear—when the blackbird is silent within his wicker cage, the parrot at rest upon his perch, and Juliet, wakeful as she is, has nestled in the bosom of her mistress—then am I again distracted by a noise, if possible, more intolerable than any I have yet described.

We have, Sir, as part of our domestic establishment, a dog and cat. The dog is of the Newfoundland kind, a very faithful, affectionate animal, and has attached himself to me by many little offices of kindness, which I am not accustomed to receive from his betters. He has no fawning or flattery in his nature; whenever he does a good-natured action, he seems to be repaid by the pleasure he takes in doing it, and a look of approbation from me sets his heart at rest. He is in general very silent, and not fond of making new acquaintances. I have made a bed for him at my chamber door, to which he regularly retires, and I believe would not resign his station, or his fidelity, to rest, like Juliet, in the bosom of innocence. The cat has a disposition altogether opposite to that of Hector; she is shy and mischievous, no caresses can tempt her to the least familiarity; a fierceness in her look, and an eager watchfulness in her manner, make her an object rather of fear than of attachment. From the irregularities of this ferocious animal, I am deprived of many a night's quiet and sleep. In short, she is a cat of most infamous morals, and I blush at the recital of her depravity. Unfortunately, my chamber windows are directly over the gutter which leads to the adjoining house; this is usually the scene of her nocturnal clamours. Contrary to all the established forms of courtship amongst us two legged animals, which are generally governed with secrecy—the meetings of those disturbers of my rest are distinguished by noises of most dreadful variety. Sometimes they run up from the lowest note to the top of the scale, with a rapidity not more wonderful than painful to the ear. Now in a key of plaintive sadness, like a moaning and complaining infant; then, by a sudden and violent transition, to tones which can only be imitated by the growling of the lion, or the discordant howlings of the tyger. Thus do they pierce the very ear of night with sounds, that, however soft and melodious they are to the cats, are to the human organs harsh and grating to the greatest degree. I have very gravely reasoned with my landlady, on the moral turpitude of keeping such an example of incontinency continually before the eyes

of her lodgers; and have pointed out to her the distresses I suffer from their frantic revels. She either does not, or will not, understand my complaints, with an intention to redress them; therefore, as my last resource, I have resolved to send an account of my sufferings to you.

It is some alleviation of our sorrows to relate them; and it may possibly render my situation somewhat more tolerable, if it should lead to the reflexion, that in society we should sacrifice some of our private gratifications, if we find them offensive to those with whom we are connected under the same roof, and that it is as much our duty to communicate as to enjoy happiness.

A Bachelor.

THE EFFECTS OF VANITY.

"..... There vanity still dwells,
Midst her fantastic joys enthron'd, and plans
Unnumber'd conquests o'er admiring man."

What mischiefs have arisen from vanity! and in every case, how poor are the qualifications it has to bestow!

Louisa Melville, before she reached the age of sixteen, was universally allowed to be one of the prettiest girls in the town in which her family resided, and she was equally admired for mental endowments, as for personal charms. Though neither born to rank nor affluence, her education was not neglected; but nature, and her own assiduity, did more for her than her parents or instructors. She made the best use of the few advantages she possessed, and, by application, was soon qualified to outstrip every rival and competitor. When nineteen, she had acquired such a stock of general knowledge, and improved herself by reading with so much success, that to her own sex she became the object of envy, as she was of admiration to the other. She was sprightly in conversation, but prudent in deportment: her affability and good sense were even more attractive than her beauty: and happy was the man who could engage her attention, and who possessed himself sufficient taste and sentiment to relish that refinement and delicacy which shone forth in all that she said or did.

Conscious that her society gave pleasure, and, perhaps, inspired with a youthful vanity of making conquests, by degrees she enlarged the circle of her male acquaintances; and by the time she was one-and-twenty, almost every hour of her time was filled up by calls from the frivolous or the idle, who were pleased to trifle away their heavy moments in converse with youth, innocence, and beauty. One or two young gentlemen, who were her superiors in rank and fortune, there was every reason to suppose, were sighing to obtain her exclusive regard; but when they would have poured out their heart before her, they found her engaged in conversation with those who had no object beyond killing a leisure hour in agreeable company, and whose vanity was flattered by the easiness with which they procured access, and the gaiety and freedom of Louisa's conversation on every subject that was incidentally started.

There is a delicacy in real regard that shrinks from public observation; and a nice sense of propriety, that leads the genuine lover to imagine his mistress is polluted, by indiscriminate conversation with every person who solicits her attention. Perhaps those who admired and esteemed Louisa Melville with the greatest degree of fervour, were, for this very reason, the least entertaining to a young lady of her disposition. Amidst such a crowd of visitants, while every tongue poured forth its adulation, and every eye sparkled with pleasure at her sight, she vainly imagined it would be no difficult matter to find a lover whenever she pleased. Flattered with the general homage paid to her beauty and her wit, she seemed to have neither time nor inclination for particular selection; and, with a heart strictly virtuous and disengaged, she gradually began to find, that though every one courted her society, no one in earnest made her those professions of partial love which are so agreeable to a female ear. She opened her eyes to her folly; but it was now too late; and, with the consciousness of innocence, which, indeed, had never been impeached, except by the envious prudes of her own sex, she discovered that the compliments she received from the gentlemen, were now rather the offspring of gallantry than of sentiment; and that her character was rendered suspected, solely by the very open and unguarded ease with which she had suffered herself to be addressed.

Though her vanity, and even her feelings, were deeply wounded by this reflection, she found it difficult to alter her behaviour. If she denied herself to those who used to lounge away their mornings in her company, it was immediately concluded that she was privately engaged; if she admitted her usual visitants, it was only to be mortified with a repetition of the same fulsome unmeaning adulation which had been so long paid to her without producing any declaration of partial attachment. Without a disposition for reserve, she imposed restraints on her words and looks, which were only interpreted to her disadvantage. She was alternately gay and distant; and sensible that she had been injuring both her prospects and her character by indiscriminate familiarity, she took every method, which delicacy would allow, to emancipate herself from the mere flatterers of her vanity, and to draw out the real sentiments of such as she hoped, or wished, might be inspired with tender sentiments towards her. Her conversation, which used to be full of freedom and vivacity, now turned on subjects which might lead her apparent admirers to explain themselves; but, instead of succeeding in her aims, the majority finding she was no longer inclined to amuse them when they had nothing else to do but talk nonsense, dropt off, and sought some more inexperienced female, who would be pleased with general compliments; and the rest could not help observing to each other, that Louisa Melville was now fishing for a husband, and that they must be on their guard.

Thus at the age of twenty-five, after being for six years the object of general attraction, her levees became deserted by all who had crowded them before; and she was obliged to retire to the house of a relation in the country, to avoid the triumphant malice of her own sex, and the sneers of such as had only flattered her to deceive. She had not been long in this situation before a lover appeared; but as prudence required that he should acquaint himself with her previous life and conversation, enquiries only excited his suspicion; and though no evidence could be produced, because none existed, that her person was not pure, it was concluded, and perhaps on just grounds, that the mind which had been accustomed to such a promiscuous society, could not escape being tainted. We look at the garden flower with pleasure, but we have little desire to make it our own; but if by chance we find the same blooming in the secret shade, we fancy its odours are sweeter, and we fondly transplant it into our borders. It is thus with genuine love: interest and policy may induce men to overlook the previous conduct of those with whom they connect themselves, if

it has not been marked by flagrant violations of decorum; but a generous attachment can only spring from a conviction of unsullied worth, and of a heart that has admitted no former impression. It is commonly supposed, that in the bosom which has once tenderly, truly loved, the enthusiam of affection can never be a second time renewed; and though the new admirer of Louisa Melville could gain no certain evidence that her heart had never been really engaged, his vanity could not reach such a pitch, as to make him forget, that of the numbers who had solicited her notice, some might, in all probability, have been more likely to make an impression than himself.

Others, who admired her person and manners, probably felt and reasoned in the same manner; and she returned to her native place without making, or at least fixing, a conquest. Reiterated instances of neglect, disappointment, and vexation, preying on a heart of sensibility, and, aggravated by the reflection, that the vanity of studying to be universally admired, instead of being individually loved, had been the source of her misfortunes, threw her into a slow fever. Her bloom faded, the roses left her cheek; and had she not felt resources within herself, and mustered all her resolution to recover some share of the composure she had lost, it is probable she would have sunk into an untimely grave. By slow degrees, however, she regained her health, and her beauty returned to nearly its former lustre; but younger competitors for admiration had arisen, and she was now only talked of as a girl that had once been pleasing; while those who had most sedulously furnished fuel to her vanity, were the first to condemn it, and to join in ridiculing the folly of her past conduct.

To withdraw from the public eye, when the public is no longer disposed to favour, is no difficult task. Louisa in a manner secluded herself from the world, and was seen only by those who were allied to her by blood, or by a generous sympathy. In this situation, she was addressed by a gentleman, who, in the height of her popularity, would have experienced only ridicule or disdain. Wearied of her unprotected state, she listened to his proposals, though a stranger, and unknown. Suffice it to say, they were speedily united; but in less than twelve-months he deserted her and an infant daughter; and, to the inexpressible anguish of the unhappy woman, it was found that the villain had another wife, and a large family, whom he had previously abandoned, residing in Ireland.

From the fate of Louisa Melville, let others learn to shun the rock on which she split. Vanity, when once thoroughly mortified, will stoop to any thing; and the winding up of her fortune was only a natural result of the path she had pursued, which regularly conducted to it.

Philadelphia,

JULY 7, 1804.

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TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THOSE who wish to see Marriages announced in this paper, may be informed, that the editor is very willing to publish such as are presented, in *due order*, for that purpose: none of any kind have yet been offered.

The perusal of the following remarks, taken from a European Magazine, is recommended to those who may be disposed to favour him with hymeneal communications.

.....

To the Editor of the Monthly Magazine.

SIR,

Your readers, as well as myself, must, doubtless, have remarked the growing custom of adding, in the announcement of marriages in the newspapers, the name of the officiating clergyman to those of the parties. When the performer is a bishop, a dean, or other dignified clergyman, it is easy to conceive that vanity in the connubial pair, or their friends, may cause this addition: but as we frequently see it made when he is only the simple rector of the parish, I have been considering what can have entitled him to this public commemoration. In similar cases, as that of naming the physician under whose auspices a cure has been effected, the record is intended as a compliment to the skill of the agent; but it is not, at first sight, very obvious that any extraordinary praise can be due to the act of reading the marriage-service. There is, indeed, a story of a clergyman's having found a child *very hard to christen:* but in that case it is suspected, that the difficulty arose from his own situation, and not from any peculiarity in the patient. Yet I cannot but think that it is no uncommon circumstance to find couples *hard to marry*, and that there is often a sufficient degree of effort in performing this feat, to apologize for the seeming vanity of making public the name of the clerical practitioner. I do not exactly know to what defect in the marriage-rites the melancholy Jacques alludes, when, dissuading the Clown from suffering Sir Oliver Martext to couple him and Audrey, he tells him, "This fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot; then one of you will prove a shrunk pannel, and, like green timber, warp, warp." The law, at present, seems to have determined, that if the union be but made, the manner of doing it is of no consequence; and even the workmanship of the smith of Gretnagreen is reckoned to hold as well as that of his Grace of Canterbury. But the task of bringing the parties together, may be a serious labour indeed. A sly old batchelor has lived a score of years with a kept madam, who has a great desire at last to be made *an honest woman* of. What a trial of skill to a confidential divine to work upon the hardened buff of this man's conscience, and mollify it down to that matrimony which has so long been the object of his scorn and ridicule! A novel-reading miss, whose heart has been softened by some neighbouring Celadon, looks with horror upon the honest Numps whom her careful father has chosen for her; and, like Anne Page, would rather "be set quick in the earth, and bowled to death with turnips," than meet him at the altar. What a profusion of rhetoric must be employed to bring such a damsel to the dutiful act of bestowing her hand contrary to the dictates of her heart! With the young spendthrift, whose stomach rises at the sight of an amorous dame of three-score, panting to deliver him from a jail by the gift of her purse and person, fewer arguments for compliance may be necessary; and yet he must, in some measure, be fashioned to the joke by persuasion. In these and similar cases, which are not very uncommon, some mediator is evidently wanted to take the part which Horace assigns to Venus:

——— cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga aenea
Sævo mittere cum joco;

and where the clergyman assumes this office, his labours certainly deserve commemoration. Under this idea, I shall for the future suppose that more is meant than meets the ear, when we are gravely told that the Rev. Mr. Such-a-one married such a couple; and that his task was

somewhat more arduous than merely reading some sentences out of a book, and afterwards, perhaps, dining with the happy party.

I remain, Sir, Your's, &c.

PHILOGAMUS.

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

Hark! the echo strikes the trembling ear,
See Night's dim curtain wraps the dark'ning pole,
O'er Heaven's blue arch bright rolling worlds appear,
And rouse to solemn thought th' aspiring soul.

Oh! lead my steps beneath the moon's dim ray,
Where yon old church stands desart and alone;
While from her time-shook tower, the birds of prey
Sound thro' the night their long resounding moan.

Short is Ambition's gay deceitful dream,
Tho' wreaths of blooming laurel bind her brow;
Calm thought dispels the visionary scheme,
And Time's cold breath dissolves the with'ring bough.

Grandeur, away! more blest the simple swain,
Who on some mossy turf reclines his head,
Where the lone widow tells the night her pain,
Whilst eve, with dewy tears, embalms the dead;

Where lilies, screen'd from every ruder gale,
Court not the cultur'd spot where roses spring,
But blow neglected in the peaceful vale,
And scent the zephyr's balmy breathing wing.

The busts of grandeur, and the pomp of power,
Can these bid sorrow's gushing tears subside?
Can these avail in that tremendous hour,
When death's cold hand congeals the purple tide?

Ah, no! the mighty names are heard no more;
Pride's thought sublime, and beauty's kindling bloom,
Serve but to sport one flying moment o'er,
And swell with pompous verse th' escutcheon'd tomb.

May no rude passion e'er my soul invade,
Nor let the wings of tow'ring Frenzy given;
Let wealth ne'er court me from the peaceful shade,
Where Contemplation wings the soul to heaven.

Oh, guard me safe from Joy's enticing snares;
From each extreme which Pleasure tries to hide;
The poison'd breath of slow-consuming Care;
The noise of Folly, and the dreams of Pride.

So, when the transient scene of life is fled,
May some sad friend recal the former years;
Then, stretch'd in silence on my dusty bed,
Pour the warm gush of sympathetic tears.

LAVINIA SOPHIA G.

FOR THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

SONNET.

How softly blows the gentle breeze,
How calm and quiet nature is,
How still the streamlet winds along
How charming is the Thrush's song;
And when together the're combin'd,
What pleasant scenes they call to mind
Of happier days that now are gone,
Never, never to return.

THE MADAGASCAR MOTHER.

By FANNY HOLCROFT.

The following is not a European Fiction; it is a real Madagascar Song, brought from that Island by the Chevalier de Porni; a prose Translation of which may be seen in Vol. I. P. 551. of Varieties of Literature.

Why shrink'st thou, weak girl? Why this coward despair?
Thy tears and thy struggles are vain:
Oppose me no more; of my curses beware!
Thy terrors and grief I disdain.

The mother was dragging her daughter away
To the white man, alas! to be sold.
"Oh spare me! (she cried) sure thou would'st not betray
The child of thy bosom for gold?

The pledge of thy love; I first taught thee to know
A mother's affection and fears.
What crime has deserv'd thou shou'd'st only bestow
Dishonour and bondage and tears?

I tenderly sooth every sorrow and care;
To ease thee, unwearied I toil;
The fish of the stream by my wiles I ensnare;
The meads of their flowers despoil.

From the wintry blast I have shelter'd thy head;
Oft borne thee with zeal to the shade;
Thy slumbers have watch'd on the soft leafy bed;
The mosqueto oft chas'd from the glade.

Who'll cherish thy age, when from thee I am torne?
Gold ne'er buys affection like mine!
Thou'lt bow to the earth, while despairing I mourn,
Not my sorrows or hardships, but thine.

Then sell me not; save me from anguish and shame!
No child thou hast, mother, but me!
Oh! do not too rashly abjure the dear claim;
My bosom most trembles for thee."

In vain she implor'd—wretched maid! she was sold;
To the ship, chain'd and frantic convey'd;
Her parent and country ne'er more to behold,
By a merciless mother betray'd.

SONG. TRUE BEAUTY.

HENRY.

I.

In mercy to mortals, lo! Cupid appears,
Spreading love all around by the touch of his dart:
Some, with vows made to wealth, he with carelesness hears;
But alone them he crowns, whose vows flow from the heart.
Tho' sweet blooming Beauty, with soft shaded hues,
Invites, by its gestures, the heart to fond duty,
'Tis a rose sure on earth; but the flower I'll chuse,
Is a well-cultur'd mind, the true myrtle of Beauty.

II.

With her thro' Life's gales then I'll prosperous steer,
No trouble shall damp me, if aught my bark meet;
And then, though Affliction should spring a sad tear,
'Twill vanish when Laura's affection I meet.
Tho' sweet blooming Beauty, with soft-shaded hues,
Invites, by its gestures, the heart to fond duty,
'Tis a rose sure on earth; but the flower I'll chuse,
Is a well-cultur'd mind, the true ever-green Beauty.

VERSES TO A YOUNG LADY.

Say why that deep and frequent sigh
Heaves thy fond bosom, gentle fair;
The tear that trembles in thine eye,
Ah! flows it from the fount of care?
Thou look'st, indeed, like some fair flow'r,
Sinking beneath the dewy show'r.

II.

Too well I guess thy secret woe:
Thou weep'st to think that one short day
May bid thy beauties cease to glow,
And pilfer every grace away.
'Tis this that melts thy tearful eyes,
And heaves thy tender breast with sighs.

III.

Yet shall not all thy beauties fade
Beneath rough Time's austere controul!
His keenest frosts shall ne'er invade
The bright recesses of thy soul,
Which, purer than the vestal flame,
For ever burns, and burns the same.

H.

☞ Should there be any omissions on the part of the Carrier to deliver THE WEEKLY MONITOR, we beg that our Subscribers will give information to the office, where the errors will be corrected, and care taken to prevent their recurrence.